



REBUILD IOWA OFFICE (RIO) LEGISLATIVE WEEKLY

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RIO MISSION:

The Rebuild Iowa Office will lead the State of Iowa's efforts to rebuild safer, stronger and smarter in the wake of the 2008 severe storms and catastrophic flooding.

RIO VISION:

We envision a resilient Iowa that will be safe, sustainable and economically strong for its people, reaffirming its ties to the land, rivers, environment and rich cultural history.

CONTACT THE RIO:

502 E. Ninth Street
Wallace Building
Second Floor
Des Moines, IA 50319
Phone: (515) 242-5004
Fax: (515) 242-5006
E-mail the RIO at:
contact@rio.iowa.gov
Visit us on the Web at:
www.rio.iowa.gov

DISASTER RECOVERY CASE MANAGEMENT LEGISLATION SIGNED INTO LAW

HF 2422, unanimously passed by the Iowa Legislature and signed into law by Governor Culver on March 22, will establish a lasting case management system in Iowa to help meet the needs of individuals and businesses affected by disasters.

The bill is believed to be the first of its kind passed in the country and is one more example of why Iowa has been identified as a leader in disaster recovery.

HF 2422 addresses recommendations 1 and 3 developed by the Rebuild Iowa Advisory Commission (RIAC) after the floods, storms and tornadoes of 2008.

The bill directs the Rebuild Iowa Office to work with the Iowa Department of Human Services (DHS) and nonprofit, voluntary and faith-based organizations active in disaster recovery and response, to establish a statewide system of disaster case management. This system could then be activated after either a governor's proclamation or presidential declaration of disaster.

The statewide system will be coordinated by DHS through committees identified by each local emergency management commission's emergency plan. These local committees will assist disaster-affected individuals and businesses in navigating recovery programs and developing individual recovery plans. In areas affected by the 2008 disasters, those committees will typically be the existing Long-Term Recovery Committees (LTRCs).



Governor Culver signs HF 2422 on March 22. The bill establishes a permanent disaster recovery case management system.

The bill requires DHS to adopt rules that include disaster case management standards and policies, reporting requirements, eligibility criteria, coordinating mechanisms, development of interagency agreements for those agencies to provide disaster case management services, and coordination of all available services for individuals from multiple agencies.

The bill also establishes a task force to recommend steps in establishing a disaster recovery case management system for businesses. Recommendations from the task force must be submitted to the Governor and Iowa General Assembly by Nov. 15, 2010.

Another bill being discussed in the statehouse also pertains to disaster recovery case

management. HF 2294 will update the "Disaster Aid Individual Assistance Grant Fund" developed by the Iowa General Assembly in 2007 and administered by DHS. This fund, which is authorized by the executive council and is capped at \$1 million per year, can be available to qualified individuals in a disaster-affected county at the request of a local emergency manager. Grant awards, which may not exceed \$5,000, are currently only available as reimbursement for expenses incurred as a result of a disaster. HF 2294 would authorize a voucher program to make it possible for eligible individuals to receive assistance even when they don't have the resources to make up-front payment. The voucher system would be developed by DHS but administered locally.

NEW ASSOCIATION WILL FOCUS ON FLOOD MANAGEMENT

Floodplain professionals in Iowa are working to form a new association with the goal of sharing and spreading knowledge of floodplain and watershed planning and management throughout the state.

Julie Tallman, development regulation specialist for Iowa City, and Jerry Skalak, project manager with the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, Rock Island, both certified flood plain managers, have been spearheading efforts to form an Iowa association of flood plain managers.

"There's been a lot of interest in forming such an organization," Tallman said. Floodplain and watershed management has come to the forefront as an important issue in the aftermath of the catastrophic and historic flooding of 2008.

Fifteen professionals – representing floodplain managers, planners, engineers, architects, and other disciplines – met for the

first time in early March, just prior to the Iowa Water Conference in Ames, to discuss organizing efforts. The next meeting will be April 7 in Cedar Rapids, just prior to the quarterly meeting of the Regional Flood Risk Management Team. Items on the agenda include a discussion with Paul Osmond, a representative from the Illinois Association of Floodplain Managers, legal requirements for forming a nonprofit association in Iowa, a name for the organization and strategic planning.

According to the procedures established by the national office of the Association of State Floodplain Managers (ASFPM) in Madison, Wis., the Iowa group will first form a state association, and then become a state chapter of ASFPM after meeting specific association goals.

"A number of us who were participating in the Water Resources Coordinating Council had talked about the

possibility of an organization and decided to move forward," Tallman explained. "I think Iowa would benefit hugely in membership."

She explained that the duties of a flood plain manager often fall to local or county officials around the state who may or may not have had training in floodplain management. The vision she shares of a flood plain association in Iowa is one of a pro-active group providing support, floodplain training and expertise, acting as a resource for officials in the communities, regions or counties.

"At one time, I was one of only one or two floodplain managers in the state," said Tallman who has been certified for more than 10 years. "Now there are 15 or 16. It would be nice to have professionals available to help out across the state."

For more information about the next meeting, contact Tallman at (319) 356-5132.



IOWA DISASTER HUMAN RESOURCE COUNCIL ASSISTS DISASTER-AFFECTED IOWANS

Case management, for both individuals and businesses, plays a crucial role in the recovery of those impacted by a disaster. One group instrumental in case management services after the 2008 disasters and even today is the Iowa Disaster Human Resource Council (IDHRC).

The IDHRC, coordinated through the Iowa Homeland and Emergency Management Division, assisted in establishing Long-Term Recovery Committees across the state. While the IDHRC also has its own active Long-Term Recovery Committee covering 42 Iowa counties, it contributes in additional ways.

Created in 2000, the IDHRC consists of representatives from faith-based and voluntary agencies, as well as key government agencies including the Iowa Dept. of Human Services, Iowa Dept. of Public Health, FEMA and Rebuild Iowa Office. It also serves as the state's VOAD (Voluntary Organization Active in Disaster).

The IDHRC's mission is to bring together faith-based, voluntary and government organizations active in disaster services to foster a more effective response and recovery for the people of Iowa in times of disaster. The IDHRC works with county emergency

managers and city leaders to identify available resources to address unmet needs of disaster-affected Iowans.

Even in non-disaster times, the IDHRC is active encouraging the formation of local Long-Term Recovery Committees and identifying groups of volunteers that can be quickly organized once a disaster strikes.

Non-profits and faith-based groups interested in getting involved or needing assistance to establish a local Long-Term Recovery Committee may contact the IDHRC at (515) 323-4232.

